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No. 307

WINNING AN HEIRESS

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A Farce in One Act

SEVEN MALE CHARACTERS

BY

F. URSULA PAYNE

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NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
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SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

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WINNING AN HEIRESS.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

BEN BORROW, HENRY HARDUP, SAM SLOW, ANDREW ASKUM, NED NATTY ..... *Chums living together*

ISRAEL COHEN ..... *A tailor*

JIMMY CRAPPS ..... *The janitor's assistant*

MISS HIGHROX, *An heiress*
MRS. KEERFUL, *Her aunt*

To be mentioned on the program, in order to surprise audience at end.

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JUL 13 1915

Winning an Heiress

ACT I.

SCENE:—*Room in small flat, New York City. The room is furnished fairly well, is not very neat, and is decorated with pennants, posters, etc. Window, center, back. Doors right and left up stage. Shelf and mirror, left. Table, center, with newspapers, writing materials, smoking articles, etc. Lounge, right of window, chair left of window, chairs right and left of table. Over the window, rear, is a poster which says "We Should Worry!" Piperack left of window.*

Curtain rises discovering HENRY HARDUP *and* BEN BORROW *seated at center-table.* HENRY *right;* BEN *left. Their coats and vests are missing, and both are reading newspapers on which appear in large letters, "HELP WANTED, MALE."* BEN *snatches knife from table and quickly cuts out ad.*

BEN. How's this, Hennie? This just suits muh! (*Reads*) "Wanted, handsome young man, plenty of brains, good family, quick at figures, pleasing manner, well educated, fond of children, good disposition, thoroughly honest, doesn't drink, smoke, chew, play cards or stay out late. Consistent church-member, fine figure, neatly dressed, well rec-

ommended, plenty of nerve. Must work fifteen hours a day, chaperoning an opera-singer. Salary ten dollars a week. Apply, by letter only to S. A. S., World, Uptown.

HENRY (*Who has been staring, his mouth getting wider and wider open, and who has shown other signs of collapse*) Fine, old man! Just suits you. I—I notice one thing in which I believe you will excel all other applicants.

BEN. (*Drawing himself up*) Exactly. Which one?

HENRY. You have it all right. Plenty of nerve!

BEN. (*Subsiding*) Henry, you never did appreciate me. It's your one short-coming. How many ads. have you answered to-day?

HENRY. (*Indicating letters*) Seventeen. Ought to get something out of them, I reckon. Blame it! A feller can't get along like this forever!

BEN. Well, this will be my twenty-first. (*Seizes pen, and begins to write*) S. A. S., World, Uptown, Gentlemen: In answer to your advertisement in to-day's "World" would say, I am a handsome young man——

(*Enter* ANDREW ASKUM, *right.*)

HENRY. Hello! Andy. What's up?

ANDREW. Chucked! (*Throws down hat and coat*)

BEN. (*Laying down pen*) Chucked! What for?

ANDREW. Late again this morning!

HENRY. Well, I'll be jiggered! Why didn't you tell him all about it,—sick aunt, sent for doctor, or something?

ANDREW. No go! No go! He said he guessed it wasn't *aunt* but *ante*.

BEN. (*Laughs behind hand*) Sly old fellow, that boss of yours.

HENRY. Unappreciative though. That's the way with all my bosses, all unappreciative.

BEN. Well, we're all in the same boat. Hennie and I have been answering ads. all morning. I'd offer you this one, but fear you'd hardly suit. Not handsome enough I'm afraid.

ANDREW. (*Sitting on lounge*) It's good the rest of the fellers have jobs.

(*Enter* SAM SLOW, *right.*)

HENRY. (*Jumping*) Jehoshaphat! What's the matter with you, Sam?

SAM. (*Throwing down coat*) Fired!

HENRY, BEN *and* ANDREW. Fired! What for?

SAM. (*Drawling*) He said I was sleepy!

HENRY. Sleepy, Heavens man! You should have told him that you were much sleepier at 4 A. M.!

SAM. He says I've acted sleepy for a month. Wanted to know why my mother didn't put me to bed early.

BEN. (*With feeling*) I always said I'd be a mother to you, Sammy old boy. I told you to go to bed last night, now didn't I?

HENRY. It's good we have Ned still left with his seventeen per. Jingoes! We'll have to see that he doesn't get into debt hereafter. We've got to live somehow, by Gosh!

BEN. Dear old Ned, I always loved Ned!

(*Enter* NED, *right.* ALL *start.*)

SAM. (*After a pause, slowly*) Getting a holiday?

NED. (*Throwing down hat and coat*) No, bounced!

CHORUS. Bounced! What for?

NED. Boss said I didn't have my mind on business. Too many other interests.

BEN. It's Cecelia. I suppose you have her picture in your watch.

NED. (*Taking out watch*) Yes, there she is. She's a winner, all right!

HENRY. Yes, no doubt, but *you* won't be if you've lost your job!

NED. (*Sentimentally*) She doesn't care for money. She loves roses.

BEN. (*Aside*) At two dollars apiece!

SAM. (*Slowly*) Well, this *is* a go! How're we going to live?

BEN. I wish you hadn't lent Uppers that forty dollars, Henry.

HENRY. O well, Uppers is a good skate all right, and he was in a hole. I hated to see the poor thing suffer.

BEN. Maybe he'll pay it back soon.

HENRY. Swell chance!

ANDREW. If only we didn't owe anything!

NED. O, blame the debts!

(*Ring at the bell.* BEN *starts up.*)

ANDREW. Hold on, old man. Call down the tube first.

HENRY. (*At door right*) No use, he's coming up the stairs. Sounds like old Cohen, too. Who doesn't owe him anything? Ben you're the only one. You'll have to stay and face him. (*Exit, left, all but* BEN.)

COHEN. (*Outside*) Is the gentlemens in?

BEN. No, all out but me, Mr. Cohen. Better come another time.

COHEN. (*Raising voice*) But I must come in now. If you open dis toor I tell you about mine family.

HENRY. (*Looking in left*) Let him in, Ben, or the whole house will know! Give him some jolly. Only keep him still!

BEN. (*Opening the door*) Well, come in, Mr. Cohen, come in! (*Exit* HENRY).

(*Enter* MR. COHEN.)

MR. COHEN. You see, Mister, I must haf dat moneys quick. My wife, she haf fall down and sprain her ankle.

BEN. Too bad, Mr. Cohen. You have my sympathy! Now, I think I have a little something that may help her. (*Looks around wildly, seizes bottle of hair-restorer. Aside*) Ned's hair-restorer, useful at last! (*Aloud*) Ask your wife to try this Mr. Cohen. It is fine for, for shoulders,—I mean ankles. And remember me to Mrs. Cohen. (*Pushes* COHEN *toward door right*)

COHEN. But, my moneys, I want my moneys!

BEN. Yes, I know, but you see I don't owe you anything,—yet; and the other gentleman are out—very much out,—and really I shall tell them the moment they come in. (*Pushing him toward door*) I know that they will feel so sorry for Mrs. Cohen, and will want to pay up at once, and (*pushing him out*) don't forget to use the medicine! (*Through the door*) Use plenty of it; it's fine!

(*Enter Ned, followed by the others.*)

NED. Confound you, Ben! Did you give that old Sheeny my hair-restorer?

BEN. Now come, old man, be reasonable. Cohen's wife has a sprained ankle, and——

NED. But that stuff cost a whole dollar.

HENRY. (*Taking hold of* NED'S *hair*) "Danderine grew this hair and we can prove it."

SAM. (*Slowly*) You mustn't mind being a little bald, Neddy, dear. You can see fine from the bald-headed row.

ANDREW. Besides, a bald spot looks so distinguished.

NED. (*Knocking down a chair*) Confound it! You fellows have no feeling!

(*Knock at door, right. The boys start toward door, left. Door, right, opens a little and* JIMMY CRAPPS *looks in.*)

JIMMY. Youse fellers has got to cut it out, see?

ANDREW. Cut out what, Jimmy? Come on in.

(*Enter* JIMMY. *He carries a broom and is chewing gum, which he pulls into a long thread occasionally. A dime novel is sticking out of his pocket.*)

HENRY. What's the score, Jimmy?

JIMMY. Brooklyn, 3. Chicago, 2. De lady down stairs says youse is making too much noise, see! She says youse should go to work!

ANDREW. (*Seizing his hat*) Where's the job, Jimmy?

JIMMY. (*Pulling out gum*) Job, nothin'. De lady down stairs says she can't hear herself tink!

SAM. (*Slowly*) I'm not surprised at that.

JIMMY. Anyhow, youse has got to chuck de noise, see?

BEN. All right Jimmy, we're on. Church mice for ours! (JIMMY *starts to twist himself toward the door on his heels.*)

NED. What makes you so wriggley, Jimmie?

JIMMY. (*Backing out of the door and pulling out gum*) I can't help being Wriggley, I chew Spearmint, see?

(*Exit.*)

HENRY. Jingoes, what a relief! I thought sure he had another note from the real estate agent.

BEN. If Haskins & Son get impatient we're up a tree for further orders. There's not a guy among us that can scrape up enough for the rent.

ANDREW. Oh, Haskins is real good-natured. I don't think he'll bother us again. (*Knock at door, right. All start toward door, left as before.*)

JIMMY. (*Poking in his head*) I forgot something, gents. (*Entering, holding dime novel in one hand and letter in the other*) De agent told me ter give youse dis letter. It's up to me to wait for an answer, see?

(ALL *sink back in various attitudes of despair. Nobody takes the letter.* JIMMY *standing right, holds out letter in right hand while reading aloud from book in left hand. He makes motions with letter.*)

JIMMY. "The villain approached stealthily with dagger drawn. The pale maiden was helpless. Her head was laid back aginst the tree, her fair neck gleamed in the moonlight. Where was our hero? Would he never come? The villain took a step nearer. He raised the dagger. In another moment the deed would be done!" (JIMMY *wildly plunging in the air with the letter, loses his balance and lands in* HENRY'S *lap. Struggling up*) What's de matter wid yez? Why don't yez take yer letter? Didn't I tell youse I had to wait for an answer?

BEN. (*Seizing the letter*) All right, we'll read it. (*Reads aloud, while* JIMMY *reads to himself, making wild gestures in the air. The others listen disconsolately*) Gentlemen: It pains me to inform you that the rent for your apartment has been in arrears for two months. We should be greatly obliged if you will favor us with a check at once. Unless payment is made within the next month we must insist that the apartment be vacated or a writ of dispossess will be served.

Very truly yours,

HASKINS & SON.

ANDREW. Check at once! I wonder, do they think Rockefeller is one of the boarders here?

NED. Of course something is sure to happen within a month. Somebody may leave me a fortune, or Sammy may pick up a nice old man's pocketbook, or Benny may rescue some rich female from a fire, or——

SAM. (*Slowly*) Or Uppers may pay Henry that forty dollars.

JIMMY. (*Rousing himself*) Has youse fellers got that answer ready?

HENRY. Sure we have, Jimmy. Tell Mr. Haskins that we greatly appreciate his kind wishes, and we shall certainly favor him with a check within a month.

JIMMY. Is dat all?

HENRY. (*With dignity*) At present that is all, Mr. Crapps.

JIMMY. (*Sauntering toward door, still chewing*) Oh, very well.

NED. (*Suddenly seizing box of cigarettes from table*) And, Oh, Jimmy, please accept this little gift as a slight token of our esteem.

JIMMY. (*Pocketing cigarettes*) Tanks, just my brand. (*Exit*)

BEN. Holy smoke! Ned, those were my cigarettes!

NED. (*Bowing low*) To balance my hair-restorer, dear boy.

BEN. (*Clutching hair*) My last box!

(*Door bell and postman's whistle outside.*)

HENRY. (*Jumping up*) The letter man! (*Taking out key, running to door and calling*) Hey, Jimmy, bring up those letters like a good kid! (*Exit right*)

BEN. A job at last!

NED. A letter from Cecelia!

SAM. An invitation!

ANDREW. Bills!

HENRY. (*Re-entering*) No fooling, boys; one of us has got to marry an heiress.

SAM. Bring on the heiress.

(*Enter* JIMMY *with letters.*)

JIMMY. Here's enough to choke de box. One fer each of youse and one for de bunch. (*Throws them on table, each seizes his own, glances at its contents, puts it quickly in pocket*)

JIMMY. (*Going toward door*) Ta—Ta. (*Exit*)

BEN. Where's the one for the bunch? (*Seizes it*) Listen, fellers. It is from Helpum. (*Reads*) Dear old Chumps:—

I have some good news for you.

CHORUS. Ah!

BEN. You are going to have some new neighbors.

CHORUS. Oh!

BEN. An heiress will live across the street from you in a few days.

CHORUS. Ha!

BEN. She will live with her aunt at No. 341, second floor. (ALL *rush to the window and peer out*) She likes society (ALL *turn around*) and desires to be entertained as much as possible. (ALL *scratch heads*) She likes to be invited out, and it is all right, for her aunt always chaperons her.

CHORUS. (*Dubious*) Oh!

BEN. She is very beautful.

CHORUS. (*Delighted*) Ah!

BEN. But she always wears a veil when she goes out.

CHORUS. (*Disappointed*) Oh!

BEN. She has only one defect.

CHORUS. What!

BEN. She is dumb, though not deaf.

CHORUS. (*Pleased*) H'm.

BEN. I have sent you a letter of introduction.

CHORUS. Ah!

BEN. Call and invite her to some sort of racket as soon as possible. One of you is sure to be a winner. (*Each draws himself up*) Good luck to you.

HAROLD HELPUM.

HENRY. A dumb heiress. Well that's a God-send!

BEN. Fine as silk!

SAM. I'd ask nothing better than a wife that couldn't talk.

NED. Well, it's up to us to entertain her.

ANDREW. Sure thing.

BEN. We can't invite her here.

ANDREW. Why not?

BEN. Why, man, we haven't a good enough place.

NED. Oh, that can be fixed up all right!

SAM. I suppose we ought to have tea or—or something.

HENRY. The dishes are not fit.

ANDREW. I'll have a look at them. (*Exit left*)

NED. And I'll see what we have in the pantry. (*Exit left*)

BEN. (*Left, aside*) Now I can examine my letter again. (*Reads*)

DEAR BEN: Just a line to put you wise. The new heiress is very fond of elocution. Take a tip from me and learn some real touching piece, like "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night." Recite it well and you're a winner. (*Speaking*) I wonder if they have that in the library?

HENRY. (*Right, aside*) This is good of Harold. (*Reads*) DEAR HENRY: Just a line to put you wise. The new heiress dotes on strong men. Get some heavy weights, and show her a few stunts

and—you'll get her sure. (*Speaks*) It's good I don't owe anything to the sporting-store!

SAM. (*Center, aside*) This is pretty good. (*Reads*) DEAR SAMMY: Just a line to put you wise. The new heiress is crazy over music. Learn some sentimental song like "O Promse Me" and your fortune is made. (*Aloud*) I'll do it by gum!"

(*Enter,* ANDREW, *carrying a few plates and cups of various sizes and patterns. He is followed by* NED *who carries two shredded wheat biscuit and an open can of condensed milk.*)

ANDREW. Behold our rare old china!

NED. And our sumptuous food!

BEN. Heavens, this will never do!

ALL. We must have money.

HENRY. There's only one thing left to do.

ALL. What?

HENRY. Pawn our watches! (ALL *reach for watches*) Sammy, old Goldstein knows you pretty well. Collect the watches, and go before we repent.

SAM. (*Holding out hat*) Drop 'em in.

NED. Just a moment, old man! (*Removes picture from watch and kisses it*) Dearest Cecelia!

(SAM *turns to* HENRY.)

HENRY. Wait a moment if you please. (*Takes lock of dark hair out of watch. Aside*) Dear little girl.

(SAM *moves toward* ANDREW.)

ANDREW. Just a moment! (*Takes faded flowers out of watch. Aside*) "Only a pansy blossom."

(SAM *moves toward* BEN.)

BEN. I'm not quite ready. (*Takes small note out of watch. Aside*) This precious letter!

SAM. (*Setting down hat and taking out watch. Aside*) I must take my darling's--I mean my cousin's likeness out of this watch. (*Takes it out and drops watch in hat, then, standing center and holding out hat*) Now, fellers, poney up!

ALL. (*Holding watches over hat. Tune,—chorus to "How Can I Bear to Leave Thee"*)

Farewell, farewell, my watch so fine,
Farewell, farewell, to old Goldstein!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*Same as in Act I. The room is neater, the table has been moved to left, and there has been some attempt at decoration. The poster over the window has been replaced by one saying "'Life is real, life is earnest,'" Longfellow. Some pipes are still in rack, left of window, and a tobacco jar is on the table with the writing materials, also a waiter's apron.*

Curtain rises discovering BEN, *book in hand, rehearsing his "piece."*

BEN. (*With tragic gestures*)

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered,
Pointing to the prison old,
With its walls so dark and gloomy,
Walls so dark and damp and cold.

(JIMMY *pokes head in door, right. He looks alarmed, and enters stealthily, staring at* BEN.)

BEN. (*Continues*)

"I've a lover in that prison

(JIMMY *looks where* BEN *points. All along* JIMMY *shows great interest and alarm.*)

BEN. (*Continues*)

"Doomed this very night to die,
At the ringing of the curfew,
And no earthly help is nigh."

JIMMY. Oh, Gee! What's the matter, Mr. Borrow. Can't I give you a lift?

BEN. (*Not hearing*)

"Cromwell will not come till sunset,"
And her face grew cold and white,

(JIMMY *shudders.*)

"As she spoke in husky whispers,
"Curfew must not ring to-night!"

JIMMY. (*Aside, tapping his forehead*) He's got 'em all right. Hope he ain't dangerous.

BEN. (*Continues*)

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton,
Every word chilled her young heart,
Like a thousand gleaming arrows,
Like a deadly poisoned dart.

JIMMY. (*Aside, shuddering*) This is worse than moving pictures. (*Aloud*) Hey, Mr. Borrow, what ye givin' us? Ye ain't been drinking, I hope.

BEN. (*Continues*)

"Long, long years I've rung the curfew,
From that gloomy, shadowed tower,
Every evening, just at sunset,
It has——

JIMMY. (*Interrupting, hand to mouth*) Smoking on the four rear seats only. Turn over, it's time to get up. (*Pulls* BEN *by the coat*) Hey, Mr. Bor-

row, try a Bromo Seltzer. It's fine for that there trouble of yours.

BEN. (*Turning around*) What the— What do you mean by interrupting an elocutionist?

JIMMY. A—a—what?

BEN. Jimmy you do not understand the artistic temperament. You cannot appreciate a passionate delivery.

JIMMY. You have me there, pard. I'm up against it all right. You feelin' better now?

BEN. (*With dignity*) I shall not attempt an explanation.

JIMMY. No, plain Bromo Seltzer is better, I guess. Now what's the job that you fellers want me to do?

BEN. Oh, yes, Jimmy. (*Puts book in pocket*) You see we are expecting distinguished guests today. Ahem! In short we are expecting Miss Highrox and her aunt, Mrs. Keerful, this afternoon. (JIMMY *looks much impressed*) We intend to entertain them in a manner befitting our station in society. (*With a flourish*)

JIMMY. Well, how is that up to me? Put me wise.

BEN. Exactly. You will remember that Mr. Hardup explained to you that a circumstance, over which we have no control, prevents us from engaging our regular caterer. (*Ahem*) However, having noticed your genteel bearing (JIMMY *draws himself up*) we have decided to engage you as butler, for about one hour.

JIMMY. Sure; so Mr. Hardup said. He told me I had to rig up like a bar tender, or something like that. Where's de costoom?

BEN. (*Taking waiter's apron from table*) Here it is, Jimmy. I am sure it will give you a very distinguished appearance.

JIMMY. Holy smoke!

(BEN *ties the apron on* JIMMY.)

JIMMY. Gee! I look like that pan-cake man in Child's restaurant. Ain't I the candy kid?

BEN. It certainly gives you quite a distinguished air; but I would respectfully suggest a slight change of posture.

JIMMY. (*Feeling neck, etc.*) Change what? Change nothing. Des is me glad rags I'll have youse to know.

BEN. The suit is every thing that can be desired. The color a trifle light, perhaps, but not bad you know. I would suggest, however, that you draw yourself up slightly. Have you ever noticed a waiter in the Waldorf Astoria?

JIMMY. What? Muh? Nixey, not on your tin-type. But I've been in Child's. Dey has girls der tho. Stunners with big pompadores and white tidies on der heads.

BEN. (*Despairingly*) Well, do the best you can, Jimmy. And, by the way, for this afternoon, we must call you by your last name, Crapps, simply Crapps. Now let us suppose that the ladies have knocked at the door. You are to open it, so. (*Opens the door, right, and stands stiffly beside it*) If the ladies say "Are the gentlemen at home?" you must reply, "They are. What name shall I say?" When they have mentioned their names, you are to say, "Be seated, and I will inform them of your arrival."

JIMMY. Holy smoke!

BEN. (*Shutting door*) Now, try it.

(JIMMY *slowly opens door, just in time to admit* HENRY HARDUP, *who is laboring to lift in two heavy dumb-bells.*)

HENRY. (*Setting down dumb-bells, and wiping perspiration from brow*) Whew! isn't it warm?

BEN. No wonder you're warm. Where did you get those blamed things? (*Indicating dumb-bells*)

HENRY. (*With dignity*) From my friend Mr. Spalding.

BEN. But why in thunder did you bring them home to-day?

HENRY. Well, you see, old chap, I—I really need exercise you know.

BEN. Nonsense! Here I am doing all the hard work of drilling Jimmy—I mean Crapps, in his new duties, and you are sporting around buying this truck. I'm disgusted. Come, Crapps, since no one else shows proper interest in your training, I must do it myself. Come to the kitchen and I will give you full instructions.

JIMMY. Sure Mike! (*Follows* BEN *toward door, left, but stops suddenly*) Say, Mr. Borrow!

BEN. (*Stopping at door*) Well, Crapps, what can I do for you?

JIMMY. Say, when does I get me pay for dis?

BEN. You'll get a dollar this very night. (*Exit* BEN, *left*)

JIMMY. Hurray! Ten admissions to the Movies! (*Exit* JIMMY, *left*)

HENRY. (*Glancing around to see that no one is looking*) Now I'll practice a few stunts. They ought to be heavy enough to impress that heiress. (*Starts to lift dumb-bells*)

SAM. (*Outside window, singing very slowly*) "Oh, promise me that you will take my hand."

HENRY. (*Setting down dumb-bells*) Cats! (*Rushes to window and looks out*)

SAM. (*Outside*) "The most unworthy in this lonely land."

HENRY. (*Turning around*) Suffering snakes! It's Sammy. He must be crazy. He's coming up, I'll have a few minutes to practice. (*Takes up dumb-bells again, and lifts them slowly toward shoulders*)

SAM. (*Outside door, right*) "That we shall be alone and faith renew." (*Opens door and comes in holding sheet music*) "And find the hollows where those flowers grew." (*Walks in without noticing Henry, who goes on practicing*) "Those first sweet violets of early Spring." (*Runs into* HENRY, *who suddenly lets the dumb-bells fall.* JIMMY *and* BEN *hurriedly open the door, left*)

BEN. (*Angrily*) What in thunder!

JIMMY. The lady down stairs——

(BEN *shoves him back.*)

BEN. What the dickens are you fellers fooling around here for? Those ladies will be here within ten minutes.

(SAM *puts music in pocket;* HENRY *conceals dumb-bells under the table. Both try to look in mirror at once.*)

HENRY. Where's Ned and Andrew?

BEN. You've got me. They said they would buy something for the ladies, flowers or something, but they haven't shown up.

HENRY. Well, all the more chance for us if they don't come.

SAM. (*Slowly*) Yes, that Ned's considered handsome.

HENRY. (*Settles his tie*) Oh, I don't know, most ladies take to me.

BEN. Don't forget, fellers, there's not enough spoons to go round. If you don't get one, mum's the word.

(*Knock at door, right.*)

BEN. There they are now. Come here, Jimmy. (*Enter* JIMMY) Now, fellers, we'll all vacate until

the ladies are properly seated. (*Exit* SAM *and* HENRY)

BEN. (*To* JIMMY) Don't forget what I told you to say.

JIMMY. (*Standing stiffly at door*) Not on your life. (*Exit* BEN)

(*The knock is repeated.* JIMMY *slowly opens the door to admit old* COHEN, *who comes slowly in.*)

COHEN. Is the gentlemens in.

JIMMY. They are—What! (*Stops, staring*)

BEN. (*Through the door*) Say no, Jimmy. It's the wrong party. Tell him we've all gone to the contagious disease hospital.

JIMMY. (*Behind his hand*) Sure. (*To* COHEN) Get out o' here, ye Sheeny. They're all in the hospital, see?

(*Exit* COHEN *hurriedly,* JIMMY *shuts the door. Enter* BEN. SAM *and* HENRY *look in left.*)

BEN. Good for you, Jimmy, you're a brick. Whew, what an escape!

SAM. (*Slowly*) Has he gone for good?

JIMMY. Sure, he's melted, vanished.

(*Knock at door.*)

BEN. Wait a minute, Jimmy, I'll investigate this time. (*Crosses to right, and stooping down, looks through key-hole. Others behind, trying to see*)

BEN. I see some skirts. (*Rising*) It's all right, Jimmy, just give us a chance to get away. (*Exit left* SAM, BEN, *and* HENRY)

(*The knock is repeated.*)

BEN. (*Looking in, left*) Now do it up well, Jimmy.

JIMMY. Sure. (*Opens door slowly, enter* MRS. KEERFUL, *followed by* MISS HIGHROX. *Both are heavily veiled. Really* NED *and* ANDREW *in costume*)

MRS. KEERFUL. (*In high pitched tone*) Are the young gentlemen at home?

JIMMY. (*Stiffly*) Yes ma'am. will youse make me acquainted with your names?

MRS. KEERFUL. You may announce Mrs. Keerful and Miss Highrox.

JIMMY. Sure! Now if youse 'ill sit down, I—I —I'll git de bunch.

(MRS. KEERFUL *motions to* MISS HIGHROX, *who apparently talks with her fingers.* JIMMY *stops and stares.*)

JIMMY. (*Aside to audience*) Get on to de dummy. (*Exit left*)

(MISS. HIGHROX *nudges aunt and they appear to confer. Enter* BEN, *followed by* HENRY *and* SAM. *They bow awkwardly.*)

BEN. Since we did ourselves the honor to call the other day, we have looked forward to this—this—this——

HENRY. Pleasure!

BEN. Yes, pleasure. And we hope that you will —will—will——

SAM. Enjoy yourselves.

BEN. Yes, enjoy yourselves.

HENRY. Won't you take off your wraps?

MRS. KEERFUL. No, thank you, I am so afraid of drafts.

BEN. But surely you will remove your veils. We —we—have heard so much about your—your——

HENRY. (*Interrupting*) Your great beauty, that——

SAM. (*Interrupting and shoving* HENRY'S *arm*) That we long to see—see——

ALL. See you.

(MISS HIGHROX *talks on fingers to her aunt.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. (*In high voice*) No, thank you. You see I am troubled with asthma, and my dear niece has such a *very* delicate complexion that she is scarcely ever without a veil.

HENRY. (*Bowing*) This makes us even more anxious to see her.

(MISS HIGHROX *simpers behind fan.*)

BEN. I will ring for some tea.

MRS. KEERFUL. Oh, thank you. That will be delightful.

(BEN *rings bell.* HENRY *and* SAM *look anxiously toward the door. Enter* JIMMY, *left, carrying tray on which are cups and saucers.*)

JIMMY. (*Who is chewing gum*) Here I am, gents. (*Stumbles and nearly falls. Great alarm shown by others*)

BEN. Serve the ladies, Crapps.

JIMMY. Sure! (*Holds tray toward ladies, each takes a cup*)

MRS. KEERFUL. Have you a little lemon for Miss Highrox?

JIMMY. Not on your life, I never hands no lemons to de ladies, see? (*With a flourish. Ladies looked shocked*)

BEN. We must beg you to pardon our—our—butler. We are only just training him. He is not used to the best families.

JIMMY. What yer givin' us? (*Passes tea to the boys*)

BEN. (*Aside to* JIMMY) Take that gum out of your mouth.

(JIMMY *takes it out and attaches it to the under part of a table.*)

BEN. (*Continuing*) And, Miss Highrox, pray accept our humblest apologies for not serving lemons with the tea. On account of the earthquake in Italy, the lemons are not of their usual flavor—and—and—and——

HENRY. (*Interrupting*) We couldn't think of serving such lemons to—to—to——

SAM. Beautiful and delicate ladies—like—like——

ALL. You.

(MISS HIGHROX *makes signs with her hands.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. My niece says that the matter is really of no moment.

BEN. You are too kind.

JIMMY. (*Aside to* BEN *as he goes toward the door*) Tell dem to put up the shades. (*Indicating veils. Exit* JIMMY)

(HENRY, *who has received no spoon, tries to stir his tea by moving the cup round and round.* MISS HIGHROX *makes signs to her aunt.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. My niece wishes to know why you stir your tea in that peculiar manner.

HENRY. (*Embarassed*) Well, you see in my family we never use spoons, at least—a—a—a—a——

BEN. (*Coming to his relief*) You see we are all fond of telling fortunes with tea leaves.

(MISS HIGHROX *makes signs again.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. My niece is delighted. She wishes her fortune told at once.

(*Much embarrassment among the boys.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. Won't you tell her fortune, Mr. Hardup?

HENRY. Yes, yes, of course, certainly. (*Shakes fist at* BEN, *and then approaches the ladies and takes* MISS HIGHROX'S *cup. The others gather round*)

HENRY. You will soon be married (MISS HIGHROX *puts head behind fan*) to a tall, broad-shouldered, light gentleman. (*Describes himself*)

SAM. (*Interrupting*) No, no, he's short and dark. (*Describes himself*)

BEN. Nonsense, he's tall and light all right, but he's slender. (*Same*)

MRS. KEERFUL. This is very confusing, gentlemen. You must be out of practice.

HENRY. Yes, yes, exactly, we are——

BEN. (*Helping him*) We are a little——

SAM. A little out——

ALL. Of practice.

(MISS HIGHROX *makes signs to her aunt.* BEN *rings the bell. Enter* JIMMY.)

BEN. Crapps, remove the cups.

(JIMMY *does so, while* BEN *looks secretly into book.* HENRY *tries muscles, and* SAM *consults music.* JIMMY *takes gum from under table. Exit* JIMMY.)

MRS. KEERFUL. My niece has heard that you are very talented young men. (ALL *draw themselves up*) You know my niece can hear, though she has

been deprived of speech. Can one of you recite?

BEN. (*Aside*) At last! (*Aloud, bowing*) Ladies, I was once an elocutionist. (*Signs of surprise and amusement from* SAM *and* HENRY) And although my repertoire is small, I will endeavor to render a few verses. (ALL *compose themselves to listen*) My title is an old one. "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night." (*Signs of disgust from* HENRY *and* SAM. *All the time he is reciting they show signs of disgust. He recites hesitatingly but with many tragic gestures*)

"England's sun was slowly setting,
O'er the hills so far away;
Filling all the land with beauty
At the close of one sad day.

And the last rays kissed the foreheads
Of a man and maiden fair
He with step so slow and weakened,
She with sunny floating hair!

He with sad bowed head and thoughtful,
She with lips so cold and white,
Struggling to keep back the murmur,
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Sexton,"—Bessie's white lips faltered,
Pointing to the prison old,
With its walls so dark and gloomy,
Walls so dark and damp and cold,—

"I've a lover in that prison,
Doomed this very night to die
At the ringing of the Curfew,
And no earthly help is nigh.

Cromwell will not come till sunset;"
And her face grew strangely white,
As she spoke in husky whiskers—

(ALL *surprised.*)

As she spoke in whisky huskers

(HENRY *and* SAM *laugh.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. Oh, we can't listen to any more, really, Mr. Borrow. We didn't know it was about whisky, and we are teetotalers you know.

(MISS HIGHROX *looks much shocked.*)

BEN. But—but——

MRS. KEERFUL. (*Putting up hand*) No more, no more, please.

HENRY. Perhaps the ladies are interested in physical culture. (*Bowing*) Would you like to see a few stunts—I mean exercises?

(MISS HIGHROX *makes signs.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. We should be delighted, Mr. Hardup. Pray let us see them at once.

(HENRY *takes out dumb-bells and proceeds with great effort to do some exercises. Ladies look on making signs of admiration, while boys laugh behind hands. In an effort to raise the dumb-bells unusually high he lets one fall out of his hand and it hits* MISS HIGHROX'S *foot. The aunt screams, and* MISS HIGHROX *shows signs of fainting.*)

BEN. (*Pulling* HENRY *away*) Now you've done it, you lobster. (*To* MRS. KEERFUL) How is she?

MRS. KEERFUL. She'll be all right in a minute. Some smelling salts, please.

(SAM *and* BEN *run aimlessly around.*)

BEN. I—I'm afraid——
SAM. We haven't any.

(MISS HIGHROX *straightens up.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. She's better now, thank you.
BEN. (*Aside to* HENRY) For goodness sake apologize.
HENRY. (*Approaching ladies*) Pray pardon me, ladies. It was due to the awkwardness of the dumb-bell.

(MISS HIGHROX *makes indignant signs.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. My niece begs you not to refer to her infirmity. If she is a dumb belle, she does not consider herself awkward.

(HENRY, *much confused.*)

BEN. (*Aside*) You've queered yourself now.
HENRY. (*Aside*) I don't care. She has big feet anyway.
MRS. KEERFUL. A little music would be so soothing. Can't one of you sing?
SAM. (*Rising and bowing*) At one time I had a fine voice. (*Boys laugh aside*) Although the cares of business have somewhat impaired it, Ahem, I shall try to render an air from "Robin Hood." (*Opens music and sings. Disgust from boys*)

(*Song, "O, Promise Me." Knock at door, right.* SAM *stops singing.* ALL *look alarmed.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. There is some one at the door, I think.
BEN. Yes, yes, but there are so many beggars and peddlers about and—and——

(*Knock repeated. Enter* JIMMY, *left.*)

JIMMY. (*Behind hand*) Shall I open it, gents?

(*Knock repeated.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. It might be somebody for us.

BEN. Yes, yes, of course. Open the door, Crapps.

(JIMMY *crosses right, and slowly opens door to admit old* COHEN. *Much consternation from the boys.*)

MR. COHEN. Ah, now I haf found all the gentlemen in. I can tell them about my families and mine poor vif.

(*Ladies show much surprise.*)

BEN. (*Aside to ladies*) It's a poor man whom we have been helping. You must excuse him.

HENRY. Mr. Cohen, there are ladies present. Will you call again?

MR. COHEN. Nine, I likes ladies very much. And I want that moneys.

HENRY. (*Aside to* BEN) Write him a check, for goodness sake.

BEN. (*Aside to* HENRY) But there is no money in the bank.

HENRY. (*Aside to* BEN) Well, give him a note to Paul Prudent. Maybe he'll help us again.

BEN. (*Aside to* HENRY) Swell chance! However, here goes. (*To* COHEN) What is the amount needed, my good man?

COHEN. Thirty-six dollars altogether, fer tree——

BEN. (*Interrupting*) Never mind the details. I'll give you a letter to a friend who has some of

our—our—funds. He'll doubtless give you the money at once. (*Sits down, left, and writes*) He lives just around the corner.

COHEN. I tank you, my vife tanks you. The children tank you.

SAM. Yes, yes, all right.

HENRY. Don't mention it.

BEN. Here's the letter. (*Hands it to* COHEN)

SAM. Good-morning, Mr. Cohen. (*They hustle him out, right. Exit* JIMMY, *left, laughing*)

MRS. KEERFUL. You must be very benevolent young men.

BEN. Oh, we help a fellow now and then.

HENRY. It does our hearts good to be generous.

SAM. Brotherly love, you know.

MRS. KEERFUL. (*Looking around*) There seems to be no clock here. Can any of you gentlemen tell me the time?

(ALL *reach for watches and show much embarrassment upon remembering where they are.*)

SAM. I—I—really——

HENRY. Our watches all stopped at once during the thunder storm and we sent them to be——

BEN. And, besides, we would not have a timepiece about when such charming ladies are visiting us. (*Striking an attitude*) We long for time to stretch into eternity!

(*Knock at door, right All stop in alarm.*)

SAM. (*Aside to* BEN) Suppose it is the agent.

BEN. (*Aside to* SAM) I am afraid we'll have to open the door.

(*Knock repeated. Enter* JIMMY, *left.*)

JIMMY. Shall I open the door, gents? It must be the man for the rent.

BEN. Open it of course, Crapps.

(JIMMY *opens the door, and, as no one enters, he looks out, and returns with a bill which he holds out.*)

JIMMY. There's a guy outside says here's de bill fer dem pipes and tobacco, and he's waited long enough for de money. He's getting quite peevish.

(*Much consternation among the boys.* MISS HIGHROX *makes signs to her aunt.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. (*Holding up hands in horror*) Pipes and tobacco! How shocking!

(BEN, *left, hastily conceals tobacco jar under table.* SAM, *center, takes pipe from rack and puts it in pocket.*)

BEN. (*Desperately*) Those articles must have been bought by, by,—the lady down-stairs. We—we——

HENRY. We never indulge,——

SAM. In such, such, such——

ALL. In such things.

JIMMY. (*Throwing bill out*) Dis belongs down-stairs, see? (*Slams door. Exit, left*)

MRS. KEERFUL. This is the second time this afternoon that we have heard of shocking things.

(*Knock at the door. All look nervous. Knock is repeated. Enter* JIMMY.)

JIMMY. Do youse want me to open the door?

MRS. KEERFUL. Of course, a—a—a Crapps, open it at once.

BEN. (*With dignity*) Open the door, Crapps.

(JIMMY *crosses right. All look at door.* JIMMY *opens door. Enter* COHEN, *excitedly.*)

COHEN. It is a sheet—a sheet, it is a swindle I say!

(*The boys show much alarm.*)

BEN. Pray calm yourself, Mr. Cohen. Go home to your wife and family.

HENRY. (*Hastily*) And we will call upon you during the week, and——

SAM. Give you more—more——

ALL. More money.

COHEN. (*Waving letter in hand*) More moneys, you say. What kind of moneys? Look at this. (*Showing letter*) You say I git moneys. I take it to the chentelman. I hurry; I give it to him *so.* (*Bows*) He read it; he gets a mad on him. He says you haf the *gall,* the *nerve.* He says he not pay moneys for you. He says you are a set of lazy loafers. He says I am a Sheeny,—me, *me.* (*Pointing to himself*) He tells me to get out, or he vill kick me out, *me, me.* It is a sheet, a sheet! (*Very excited, shaking fists in air*)

(JIMMY *jumps up and down in great glee.* MISS HIGHROX *makes signs to her aunt, who shows great consternation. The boys try to shove* COHEN *out.*)

MRS. KEERFUL. We must see this matter more clearly.

(*The ladies start to put up veils.*)

JIMMY. (*Pointing*) The shades is going up, gents.

(*The veils are thrown back, disclosing the faces of* ANDREW ASKUM *and* NED NATTY. *All start back in surprise.*)

JIMMY. Deys fellows, by gum!

BEN. Andrew!

HENRY. Ned!

SAM. Where is the heiress?

NED. Search me!

BEN. But the letters from Hal Helpum?

ANDREW. He wrote them to please us. We had your goat all right.

JIM. (*Looking from one to the other in amazement*) Well, I'll be busted!

(BELL *and postman's whistle heard off.*)

BEN. (*Handing key*) Here, Jimmy. Get the mail. (*Exit* JIMMY)

HENRY. I wasted two dollars on those dumb bells!

SAM. And the music was seventy-five cents!

(*Enter* JIMMY, *with letters.*)

JIMMY. Youse ought to have a private letter-carrier.

(*They all crowd around* JIMMY.)

NED. (*Seizing letter*) From Cecelia!

BEN. (*Seizing letter. Looking at printing*) "Hotel Theatric!"

ANDREW. (*Taking letter*) From the boss!

SAM. (*Reading from envelope*) "Lightagraph Moving Picture Company."

(HENRY *tries to take letter.*)

JIMMY. Go on! Dis one has to be signed for, see! (*Shows card of registered mail.* HENRY *looks excited, but signs card. Then takes letter and opens it. Exit* JIMMY, *right.* ALL *read letters,* ANDREW *and* NED *still in costumes, right;* HENRY, *center,* SAM *and* BEN, *left.* COHEN *has sunk down into a chair*)

NED. (*Reading*) "Darling Ned: A distant uncle has just left me ten thousand dollars. What is mine is yours. Come at once! With many kisses CECELIA."

BEN. (*Joyfully reading*) "Benjamin Borrow, Esq., Dear Sir: Regarding your application to act as chaperon to an opera singer,—we beg to say that we are entirely satisfied with your description of yourself and you may consider yourself engaged. The opera singer is a man weighing three hundred pounds, but the salary being ten dollars a week and board, we know that you will accept the situation.

Very truly yours,
F. KEY,
Hotel Theatric."

(BEN *hops about joyfully.*)

ANDREW. (*Reading*) "My dear Mr. Askum: Upon further consideration we have decided to reengage you, on condition that you arrive every morning at 6:30. Very truly yours, CRANK & CO." (*Speaking*) Hurrah!

SAM. (*Reading slowly*) Mr. Sam Slow; Dear Sir: Report at our office at once. We want you to appear in a moving picture as a trained snail. As you are better fitted for the position than any other man we know, we are enclosing check for fifty dollars to retain your services. Very truly yours, Lightagraph Co. (*Speaking*) I always thought that my talent would some day be appreciated. (*Holds up check*)

HENRY. (*Who has been looking wonderingly at contents of his letter*) Say, fellers! What do you think? Uppers has sent the forty dollars!

BEN. Go on! You're kidding!

HENRY. Registered letter. Here it is. (*Shows bills.* ALL *crowd around*)

COHEN. (*Lifting head*) I want my money!

JIMMY. (*Who has been standing with open mouth, looking from one to the other*) Where's me dollar?

HENRY. (*With a flourish*) Pardon me one moment, Jimmy. (*Turning to* COHEN) Mr. Cohen, the long delay has been a cause of deep sorrow to us. (*Handing bills*) Here is your thirty-six dollars!

CHORUS OF BOYS. Hurray!

COHEN. I tank you, my vif tanks you——

HENRY. Quite so! Quite so!

(COHEN *counts bills.*)

SAM. (*In a drawling voice to* JIMMY) Here, Jimmy, take this check to the agent. It's for that rent he's been talking about. I'll endorse it. (*Writes*) You can bring back the change.

JIMMY. (*Incredulously, taking money*) Say, did youse know old man Haskins has heart trouble? Ain't youse afraid this here'll be too sudden for him?

BEN. (*With dignity*) Let the levity cease, Crapps.

JIMMY. What you givin' us?

HENRY. We are giving you one dollar. Permit me. (*Hands* JIMMY *a dollar bill*)

JIMMY. (*Joyfully*) Tanks! Now I can see de other reels of "The Dangers of Daisy." (*Turning suddenly at door*) But say, where's dem swell dames, huh?

BEN. We have decided not to entertain to-day, Crapps.

SAM. (*Slowly*) Let's go out and get some eats. It's on me.

ALL. Hurrah!

(*They form a ring, dragging in* CRAPPS *and* COHEN.)

CURTAIN.

(*As curtain rises again* ANDREW *is seen at back. He has removed the motto "Life is real, life is earnest," and is replacing the motto, "We should worry." ALL are admiring it.*)

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